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Montana migratory waterfowl project land purchase of 14,640 acres approved.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY RELIEF ADMINISTRATION

1734 New York Avenue

WASHINGTON

Approval was given today by Harry L. Hopkins, Federal Emergency Relief Administration, of plans for the purchase of 14,640 acres of land in Beaverhead County, Montana, which will be utilized for the establishment of a migratory waterfowl refuge. Options on this acreage have been accepted.

The purchase of this land is being carried out in accordance with the purpose of The Land Program of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration which is undertaking demonstrations in the better utilization of land unsuited to farming.

Plans for this project have been drawn up by the Bureau of Biological Survey, Department of Agriculture, under the supervision of J. N. Darling. Located on one of the major flyways of the United States, the project will be utilized chiefly as a resting place for migratory ducks and geese.

Of particular interest from the biological viewpoint is the fact that two varieties of swans are found on this area, in addition to various ducks and geese. According to the Bureau of Biological Survey, the Red Rock area is possibly the only breeding place of the trumpeter swan which is almost extinct in the United States. According to some estimates, there are not more than 200 of these swans in the United States. Seventy-seven trumpeter swans were

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counted by the Wild Life Division of the National Park Service in the Red Rock region during February 1935.

Although acreage now being acquired for the wild life refuge is admirably adapted to game conservation purposes, it is unsuited to agricultural use. Over-grazing and cultivation of the land has resulted in severe erosion throughout a large portion.

After purchase of the land has been completed, certain improvements will be carried out by the Bureau of Biological Survey. Of particular importance will be the efforts to control the run-off of rainfall in order to preserve the water supply in the area. Steps will be taken to restore the natural grass cover on the grazing lands, and it is possible that certain parts of the area will be available for controlled grazing use during a part of the year.

Families who have agreed to sell their lands to the Government will be assisted by the Rural Rehabilitation Corporation of the State of Montana in finding homes elsewhere under better circumstances.

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